



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Celebrating 26 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

COMMISSIONERS

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Vice Chair

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Dr. Sunny Kang
Helen A. Kleinberg
Dr. La-Doris McClanay
Rev. Cecil L. Murray
Sandra Rudnick
Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW
Martha Trevino Powell
Dr. Harriette F. Williams

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **October 18, 2010**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim accounting or transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Carol O. Biondi	Stacey Savelle
Dr. Sunny Kang	Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW
Rev. Cecil L. Murray	Martha Trevino Powell
Steven M. Olivas, Esq.	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
Sandra Rudnick	

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Patricia Curry	Helen A. Kleinberg
Ann Franzen	Dr. La-Doris McClanay
Susan F. Friedman	

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Olivas at 10:07 a.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

- **October 18, 2010**

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Rudnick (Commissioners Curry, Franzen, Friedman, Kleinberg, and McClanay being absent), the agenda for October 18, 2010, was unanimously approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- **September 20, 2010**

500 West Temple Street, Hall of Administration, Room B-22, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213/974-1558 Fax: 213/625-5813

www.lachildrenscommission.org

Action Taken:

After discussion, on motion of Vice Chair Savelle, seconded by Commissioner Kang (Commissioners Curry, Franzen, Friedman, Kleinberg, and McClaney being absent), the September 20, 2010 minutes ([copy on file](#)) were unanimously approved with the following revisions:

Page 5, last bullet was revised to read as follows:

- “The Committee recommended that the Probation Department nutritionists track what food is being thrown away by youth, ~~and that~~. **It is also recommended** that DCFS adding a section . . .”

Page 6, fourth bullet first sentence was revised to read as follows:

- “Juveniles taking ~~P~~psychotropic medication ~~administered by DMH, and~~ must receive approval from the Juvenile Courts prior to **prescribing and** making any changes.”

V. CHAIR’S REPORT

Vice Chair Olivas reported the following:

- The Commission for Children and Families’ 2009/10 Annual Report is available on the Commission’s website at:
www.lachildrenscommission.org
- On behalf of Chair Curry, the Commission is requesting volunteers to plan the Commission’s holiday gathering.

Commissioner Williams volunteered to assist this year.

Action Taken:

Vice Chair Olivas’ verbal report was received and filed.

VI. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION

Office of Child Care Status Update

**Kathy Malaske-Samu
CEO, Office of Child Care**

- **Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Implementation Activities Related to the Child Care Policy Framework**
- **Child Care Issues and Trends (State Budget & Funding)**

Ms. Malaske-Samu reported the following:

- The California Legislature passed the State's budget earlier this month, followed by Governor Schwarzenegger's veto of various line-items. Governor Schwarzenegger's cuts included the CalWORKS Stage Three Child Care (Stage Three) funding. Stage Three assists families who were former CalWORKS participants and no longer receive cash assistance through this program, but are still income eligible for child care subsidies.
- Some Legislative leaders have expressed disapproval of the Governor's line item vetoes, especially those eliminating child care for low-income families; they vowed to revisit those cuts in the new legislative session next year.
- According to the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, the implications of these cuts are as follows:
 - Approximately 17,000 cut from child care programs
 - 11,000 employed parents are at risk of losing their jobs
 - 6,000 child care providers/programs will lose funding
 - 400 jobs lost in the resource and referral agencies
- An \$83.1 million cut from child care contractors will reduce the amount of cash reserves for this sector. In the years past, it has been this reserve that has allowed contractors to remain in operation while the State passed a budget.
- The Chief Executive Office's Office of Child Care also sustained some cuts. The Governor cut funding for the local Child Care Planning Council in each County in the State by approximately 50 percent. Although this cut is significant for Los Angeles County, it is most likely traumatic for other smaller counties.
- Each Planning Council is charged with identifying local needs, conduct assessment of those needs every five years, and to develop a strategic plan to address those needs. Additionally on an annual basis, the Planning Councils advise the Department of Education on areas of high need.
- The Child Care Recruitment and Retention Program locally referred to as the "Investing and Early Educators Program" received a 22-25 percent cut. This program provides cash stipends to persons who work in child development centers directly with children. The program has resulted in about 200 participants earning child development degrees a year.

- The Board of Supervisors adopted the initial Child Care Policy Framework on January 6, 2009. The initial policy identified four major goals including an update to the plan every two years. Ms. Malaske-Samu provided the Commission with a document titled, “From Silos to Systems: Connecting Child Development and County Sponsored Services,” which provides a status of the Los Angeles County Child Care Policy Framework ([copy on file](#)).

Ms. Malaske-Samu encouraged the Commission to provide input when the Child Care Policy Framework is updated in January 2011.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Malaske-Samu added the following:

- The 17,000 children who will be left without child care include children of all ages; however, the majority is school aged children.
- Reductions and cuts to the child care programs/services are final; however, several Legislative members have stated that they would like to see these cuts reversed when the Legislature reconvenes.
- Further funding reductions in child development programs will result in the closure of additional family child care homes and small centers due to a lack of capacity. Additionally, resource referral agencies, which are a part of Stage Three, will also face significant cuts.
- The Steps to Excellence Program (STEP), which has been in operation since 2007, receives funding from First 5 LA, State contracts, and the County, and as such faces cuts too. Since 2009, this Program has rated 165 licensed child care programs. STEP has projected rating numbers to increase to approximately 200 by June 2011. To date, about 365 child care programs are participating in the Program, and approximately 400 new applications have been received.

Unfortunately, the impact of the STEP has been limited because the Program was not implemented Countywide due to staffing shortages. However, it is currently being utilized in eleven communities and is seeking additional support to expand its reach.

- As parents are faced with difficult decisions regarding child care, there is a potential that the implications of cuts by the State will place children at risk.

Action Taken:

After discussion, Ms. Malaske-Samu’s verbal report was received and filed.

VII. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION
Probation Department Status Update

Reaver E. Bingham
Special Services Division
Probation Department

**Probation Chronicle – “Stories of Practice
Change in Juvenile Probation: Using Flexible
Funds in Los Angeles County to Support and Their Families”**

Mr. Bingham provided the Commission with a status update on the Probation Department and reported the following:

- Over the last eight months, the Probation Department has been in a transition state. With the hiring of Mr. Donald H. Blevins as the new Chief Probation Officer, former Acting Chief Probation Officer, Mr. Cal Remington, became the Chief Deputy Probation Officer. At the request of the Board of Supervisors (Board), a complete assessment of the Department was conducted and resulted in the development of 131 recommendations which have been adopted by the Board.
- Issues of discipline and a backlog of cases within the Performance Management Division of the Probation Department has been the focus of several reports published by the media. As a result, the Probation Department has been working with the Office of Independent Review (OIR) to address those issues. One of the recommendations from the OIR is the establishment of a Professional Standards Unit (PSU). The PSU will combine staff training and performance management in addressing hiring practices, training, and corrective actions. In addition, the Board recently approved the hiring of the two authors of the OIR report by the Probation Department.
- The Probation Department has been involved with the Department of Justice (DOJ) as it relates to issues at juvenile halls and camps. In 2009, the Department successfully completed the evaluations of juvenile halls. Hiring additional mental health staff within the camps is forthcoming.
- A digital dashboard to track program outcomes for both adult and juveniles is in the process of being installed in the Department.

Mr. Bingham along with Ms. Bonnie Armstrong, Casey Family Programs, presented the Probation Chronicle – “Stories of Practice Change in Juvenile Probation: Using Flexible Funds in Los Angeles County to Support and Their Families”, which is the result of a collaborative effort by DCFS, Casey Family Programs, and the Probation Department ([copy on file](#)).

Mr. Bingham and Ms. Armstrong added the following:

- The Probation Chronicles tell the story of three critical initiatives that the Probation Department has been involved in; Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Cross System Assessments, and Prospective Authorization Utilization and Review Unit (PAURU).
- These initiatives are designed to help the Probation Department accomplish the various tenants of the Title IV-E Waiver, primarily the reduction on the use of congregate care. It should be noted that the Probation Chronicle is not an evaluation report and does not include specific data; however, it identifies areas where further evaluation is needed. Although Casey Family Programs is involved with data collection and analysis, the chronicle was important in that it highlights the human side of the stories. Thus, the goal of the Probation Chronicle is to tell the story from the point of view of the child and his/her family.
- Foster care youth represent approximately ten percent of the juveniles in the Probation Department. Casey Family Programs became involved with the Probation Department through foster care youth in suitable placement, a program that is paid by reinvestment dollars through the Title IV-E Waiver. Programs funded by the Title IV-E Waiver have aided the Department's development of a *Practice Model* that will eventually be used with all juvenile cases within the Probation Department.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Mr. Bingham and Ms. Armstrong added the following:

- The Probation Department has continued to meet with the Education Reform Committee to address education issues for probation youth. The Department recently hired an Education Director, Mr. Jeremy Nichols.
- The two individuals who authored OIR review and recommendations for the Probation Department are attorneys who were recently hired by the Probation Department to implement the 131 recommendations. A timeline by the department is underway.
- The head of the PSU has not yet been determined due to the restructuring that is taking place within the Department.
- Currently, the total number of AWOL youth is approximately 300 to 400 youth, and there are approximately 950 youth in placement.

- Casey Family Programs worked with 25 supervisors from the four Probation Department Bureaus on the *Practice Model*, who will in turn train other supervisors. It is anticipated the *Practice Model* will reduce silos and allow for better communication and collaboration among staff.
- The Chronicles are not intended to be an evaluation report, but a human interest piece that reveals the positive effects of the flexible reinvestment funds. However, the Probation Department is working with Casey Family Programs to develop evaluation reports that focus on outcomes.
- Although the Probation Department began participating in the Title IV-E Waiver in 2007, it did not immediately receive funds to set up programs.
- The Probation Department has been involved with FFT for approximately a year and a half servicing approximately 700 youth.
- The number of Spanish speaking parents participating in FFT is not available; however, that information will be forwarded to the Commission.
- The youth involved in FFT are youth 15-17 years old; however, the Department is also working with the youth's siblings.
- Ms. Andrea Gordon is the mental health expert who is working on accessing Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project funds.

Action Taken:

After discussion, Mr. Bingham and Ms. Armstrong's reports were received and filed.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Ploehn reported the following:

- DCFS was pleased with the recent passing of the California state budget. Although, California State Assembly Speaker Ms. Karen Bass fought diligently to ensure the return of the \$80 million in child welfare funds statewide, the Governor's cuts negated her efforts, as a result of the cut DCFS will be impacted by approximately \$17.1 million. Hopefully, when the Legislature reconvenes in December 2010, these cuts will be reversed.
- DCFS will issue a press release today regarding the release of 20 child fatality cases dating back to January 1, 2008. The release of information was authorized based on the reclassification of 20 child fatalities under SB 39, a law that went into effect on January 1, 2008.

Of 31 cases that met the criteria for the second release of information under SB 39, the above mentioned 20 cases will be available for immediate release. Formal law enforcement, District Attorney, and/or counsel objections prevent the release of 10 of the cases at this time, and one case is currently being redacted for imminent release.

In response to questions posed by Commissioner Biondi and other members of the Commission, Director Ploehn added that:

- The Chair of the Commission may submit a written request to DCFS for the records of the 20 child fatality cases in question.
- The amount being charged to requestors for these records is undetermined, and County Counsel has suggested that a fee is not charged at this time.

Commissioner Biondi requested Commission Staff to draft a letter on her behalf to DCFS requesting the records of the 20 Child fatality cases.

Action Taken:

After discussion, Director Ploehn's verbal report was received and filed.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

VIII ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was none.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Vice Chair Olivas at 11: 44 a.m.